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People Profile: Albert McClendon & John Majors

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Albert Majors McClendon (Al) and John Albert Majors, III (Jam)

J. A. Majors Company
1401 Lakeway Drive
Lewisville, TX 75057

BORN AND LIVED: Both are third generation Dallasites and third generation managers of Majors Scientific Books.

FAMILY: Al and Jam both say that children (some grown) are first priority and greatest joy in life.

EDUCATION: Coincidentally, both attended Trinity University of San Antonio in different years with Al reluctantly admitting to attending there several years earlier than Jam.


FIRST JOB: Jam went into the military before joining Majors in 1978 and Al, who also joined Majors in 1978, first attended St. Mary's Law School in San Antonio and worked several years in the trust department of a large Dallas bank.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE: Both answered: Family activities, volunteer work, traveling, hunting, fishing, and hiking.

PHILOSOPHY: The Golden Rule has indubitably been the focus of our philosophy and mission since Granddad founded the company.

MOST MEANINGFUL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Having employees retire from Majors with the belief that their life has been enriched by their time at Majors.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: To be an important part of the information revolution and have significant sales of electronic content.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: We see professional information delivered to students, clinicians, and researchers by people committed to customer service. There will be continued distribution of important print product for all medical specialties. Electronic information will be delivered using the latest technology advances, with some information only accessible through publishers, but most publishers will continue to benefit by serving the distributor network as aggregators. The quick access to a wide range of information and services will continue to make close bonds between distributors and their customers. 

Interview — McClendon and Majors from page 44

duplicate a distribution service and why do/would they want to? Are your services that expensive for publishers?

AM & JM: The distributor's sale is the cheapest sale a publisher can make. They have no sales or customer service expense, minimal billing expense, no collection problems and they ship mostly bulk quantities to distributors. Most publishers understand what a good deal the arrangement is and are very supportive and appreciative of distributor services. Many publishers have not properly allocated expenses to their own warehouse activities. Any publisher that outsources quickly learns the good value of accurate pick, pack and ship services along with call center services and accounts receivable services.

ATG: What's the future of the middleman/jobber? Can they compete with the Elseviers of this world?

AM & JM: Elsevier, despite any complaints they may get, is a forward-thinking company helping to push the scientific market into the electronic world of the future. However, sometimes they may alienate customers unnecessarily by not being true partners that acknowledge the expense savings librarians have by dealing with agents and distributors who consolidate the information of multiple publishers and give librarians consolidated billing and one source for customer service and reporting. There are also many benefits for publishers who deal with distributors, and most publishers will not pass up these efficiencies.

ATG: I notice that you all have just done some "partnering" with Elsevier. And Elsevier is also partnering with OCLC/netlibrary. Why? What are the advantages? What has the reaction been to Majors' partnership with Elsevier?

AM & JM: Remember that Elsevier Health Sciences Book Division operates under different management than the Elsevier Journal Services. The book division is primarily made up of staff from Mosby and Saunders. Since they don't have a sales force dedicated to the health science libraries at universities and hospitals across the country, they have relied on the distributor network. The partnering with distributors in this market is not new although they have stepped up the marketing initiatives. This has caught the attention of many libraries and helped us both increase sales of im-

portant new books in an environment where dollars are often diverted to sexy electronic products before they are proven more useful than the new print product.

ATG: What's your secret to your rapport with your employees? It belongs in a management text.


AM & JM: Having an exciting vision and clear mission statement is the primary ingredient, but there is no secret. **Bruce Nordstrom, Steve Covey**, and many more authors have stated repeatedly that customers will only be treated as well as are the employees. What probably helps the most is to have fun along the way (also the title of **Majors'** history).

ATG: Tell us about your network in the US and how you cover the country. You don't do business internationally, do you?

AM & JM: The library market for **Majors** is the domestic market. We have reps that call on both bookstores and libraries on behalf of our STM publisher partners. We present front lists and publishers' special promotions, and we provide access to more than 100,000 STM titles on **majors.com** by title or subject area and access to another 700,000 trade titles through a strategic alliance with **Ingram**. We have a virtual standing order program allowing online editing in advance of the weekly shipment. The program includes cover images, sample chapters, and tables of content. These electronic services sell themselves once a rep gets a customer to try them.

Our sales in the US include sales to international distributors such as **Ingram, EBSCO**, and **Baker & Taylor**, so our books end up in many different countries.

ATG: When you sold your journals business in favor of your book business, some thought you were going "against the grain." Are you happy with that decision looking back a few years?

AM & JM: Our journal division was a valuable complement to our book services for many years. In the early '90s, when electronic delivery of journal content was an experiment, we saw potential expenses with no end. **EBSCO's** acquisition of the division in 1993 coincided with the advent of Web pages, followed in 1995 with **Amazon's** electronic shopping innovations. In short, the timing was perfect for our concentration of resources on new electronic services, which allowed us to continue to be a leader in book services for the STM market. 

Future Charleston Conference Dates



	Preconferences and Vendor Showcase	Main Conference
2004	3 November	4-6 November
2005	2 November	3-5 November
2006	8 November	9-11 November
2007	7 November	8-10 November
2008	5 November	6-8 November
2009	4 November	5-7 November
2010	3 November	4-6 November